

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 H-03 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00

PA-04 RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 SPC-03 OIC-04 DRC-01

(ISO) W

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R 200322Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6612

INFO USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L KATHMANDU 4388

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: NP, IPU, SZ

SUBJECT: NEPALESE DELEGATION TO GENEVA IPU MEETING

1. SEMI-OFFICIAL PRESS REPORTS FIVE MEMBER PARLIAMENTARY GON DELEGATION LEFT KATHMANDU OCT 18 FOR GENEVA AND PARTICIPATION 61ST INTERPARLIAMENTARY UNION CONFERENCE. MEMBERS OF DELEGATION ARE AS FOLLOWS:

2. (A) 35 YEAR-OLD DEL LEADER DAMBAR BAHADUR BASNYAT WHO WAS ELECTED VICE CHAIRMAN NATIONAL PANCHAYAT (UNICAMERAL NATIONAL LEGISLATURE) LAST JUNE AS CANDIDATE OPPOSED TO ADMINISTRATION, AND SINCE JULY FUNCTIONED AS ACTING CHAIRMAN AFTER FORMER CHAIRMAN (A PREVIOUS IPU PARTICIPANT) WAS APPOINTED PRIME MINISTER. BASNYAT HAS REPRESENTED PHOJPUR DISTRICT OF NEPAL'S EASTERN SAGARMATHA ZONE (SITE OF MT. EVEREST) SINCE 1963, AND WAS REELECTED FROM THAT CONSTITUENCY LAST MAY. HE HAS PREVIOUSLY PARTICIPATED IN IPU CONFERENCES. BASNYAT'S ENGLISH LANGUAGE CAPABILITY IS LIMITED AND BECAUSE OF THIS HE WAS DROPPED FROM CONSIDERATION FOR A US LEADER GRANT IN 1969. HE HAS NOT VISITED US. EMBASSY HAS HAD ONLY LIMITED CONTACT WITH BASNYAT AND WOULD BE INTERESTED IN LEARNING OF ANY EXCHANGES WITH US DEL WHICH MIGHT OCCUR GENEVA.

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(B) PITAMBAR DHOJ KHATI HAS REPRESENTED PALPA DISTRICT, LUMBINI ZONE (BIRTHPLACE OF GAUTAMA BUDDHA) SINCE 1965, RESIGNED POSITION LAST MAY AS STATE MINISTER FOR HOME-PANCHAYAT AFTER ONE YEAR IN OFFICE WITHOUT PUBLICLY STATED REASONS. ACCORDING ONE SOURCE, HE IS PRO-SOVIET COMMUNIST AND WAS DIRECTED TO RESIGN BY PALACE BECAUSE OF THIS BIAS. KHATI ATTENDED IPU 59TH SESSION PARIS 1971, AND ABIDJAN MEETING LAST APRIL.

(C) HARENDRA BAHADUR THAPA, A FORMER POLICE OFFICIAL WHO RETIRED FROM BRITISH "GHURKHAS" AFTER 15 YEARS SERVICE, IS ONE OF TWO REPRESENTATIVES OF EX-SERVICEMEN'S CONSTITUENCY NATIONAL PANCHAYAT. HE IS YOUNGER BROTHER FORMER PRIME MINISTER SURYA BAHADUR THAPA, WHO WAS RELEASED EARLY THIS MONTH AFTER 13 MONTHS' INCARCERATION UNDER SECURITY ACT FOR HAVING ADVOCATED POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION AND REFORM DURING PROSCRIBED PUBLIC RALLY. THAPA SPEAKS GOOD ENGLISH AND SEEMS WELL-DISPOSED TOWARDS AMERICANS. PRIVATELY HE IS VERY CRITICAL OF NEPAL'S POLITICAL SYSTEM.

(D) HIRA LAL VISHWAKARMA, 49, IS OF FORMERLY "UNTOUCHABLE" CASTE (SUCH DISTINCTIONS ARE NOW ILLEGAL) AND HAS APPARENTLY SPENT MUCH OF HIS LIFE FIGHTING CASTE DISCRIMINATION IN NEPAL. KING NOMINATED HIM MEMBER OF NATIONAL PANCHAYAT IN 1971, SHORTLY AFTER APPOINTMENT HE JOINED FIVE OTHER LEGISLATORS FOR TWO-WEEK GOODWILL TOUR OF NORTH KOREA. WE ARE UNAWARE OF HIS LANGUAGE CAPABILITIES OR POLITICAL PROCLIVITIES AND HAVE NOT HAD CONTACT WITH HIM.

(E) FIFTH MEMBER IS PERENNIAL IPU ATTENDEE, CIVIL SERVANT AND PANCHAYAT SECRETARY JUNG BAHADUR CHAND. ACCORDING PRESS, HE WILL ALSO ATTEND MEETING OF LEGISLATIVE GENERAL SECRETARIES AT GENEVA.
CARGO

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEETING DELEGATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 OCT 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: garlanwa
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973KATHMA04388
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS CARGO
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: KATHMANDU
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731019/aaaaanz.tel
Line Count: 96
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION IO
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: garlanwa
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 NOV 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <27-Nov-2001 by willialc>; APPROVED <18-Jan-2002 by garlanwa>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NEPALESE DELEGATION TO GENEVA IPU MEETING
TAGS: OCON, NP, SZ, IPU, (BASNYAT, DAMBAR BAHADUR), (KHATI, PITAMBAR DHOJ), (THAPA, HARENDRA BAHADUR)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005